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There is stored here a great amount of valuable information of the most varied nature, which is amplified greatly by the novel method of handling the footnotes. The latter are not only textual and grammatical. By means of "variant readings" and "related words" the vocabulary is skillfully broadened. These footnotes are treated in such a way as to make the customary set of questions and oral exercises quite superfluous. The wealth of paraphrase makes conversational drill both natural and easy.

Such a wealth of ideas is brought together here that an index becomes quite essential to make this the ready reference book that it has turned out to be for the class of pupils into whose hands it is likely to be put, as well as for the private adult student.

The editor presupposes a preparation on the part of the students which would hardly warrant the use of this book before the end of the second year, for he assumes that they "will have acquired a fairly extensive working vocabulary." This supposition accounts for the fact that so many uncommon words used in the text and notes are missing in the vocabulary.

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The Literary History of Spanish America, by Alfred Coester, Ph.D.
The Macmillan Company, New York, 1916. XII + 495 pages.

Dr. Coester's purpose in writing this literary history was, as he tells us in the preface, to offer a guide to those of us in English-speaking America who desire a better acquaintance with the mentality of our Spanish-American neighbors. By thus limiting his purpose to the production of a reliable guide-book; by calling his book a literary history rather than a history of literature; by directing our attention to the difficulties of the task, the lack of reliable sources of information in the various countries treated and the non-existence of adequate collections of books by Spanish-American writers, Dr. Coester disarms adverse criticism. Moreover, the pioneer is judged by what he accomplishes, not by what he fails to do; Dr. Coester, a pioneer in the study of Spanish-American literature, should be given credit for the great mass of information that he has assembled in attractive form, and should not be criticized too severely for certain errors of judgment or of omission.

The choice of a general plan of treatment is a difficult matter when the literatures of eighteen countries, large and small, are to be treated in one volume. To treat separately each country, or certain groups in the case of the smaller ones, would require more than one volume and would result in much repetition of historical facts and general comments, especially for the Colonial period, when similar conditions of life and close political union resulted in a certain homogeneity of literature. Similarly in the second period, that of the struggle for freedom from Spain, a common aim and political

coöperation make it possible to group the Spanish colonies of South America into one division and those of North America into another. As soon as the various colonies gained independence from the mother country family bonds were severed. "Freedom won, each country pursued its own course in literature as in politics."

The general plan adopted by Dr. Coester would seem, therefore, to be a reasonable one; namely, one chapter on the Colonial Period, the second chapter on the Revolutionary Period in South America, the third on the same period in North America, ten chapters on the political development and the literature of each of the countries of Spanish-America from the third decade of the nineteenth century until about 1890. A final chapter brings together once more the various parts of Spanish-America in a unified treatment of their literary productions of the last twenty-five years, in so far as they have been affected by the "Modernista" movement.

Chapter I, the Colonial Period, gives us a brief account of the historical background of three centuries, the spread of Spanish culture in the New World and the production of literature, especially in the two vice-regal capitals, Mexico City and Lima. Of literature in its restricted sense, poetry easily holds first place. In chapter II somewhat more attention is given to the historical background, for the reason, presumably, that the general reader in this country knows even less about the wars of independence in Spanish-America than about the Spanish conquest and the Colonial régime. The story of the long struggle by which South America gained independence from Spain is told clearly and succinctly, the campaigns of the North and the South under the leadership of Bolívar and San Martín, respectively, followed by the concentration of their victorious armies in the final struggle against the royalist forces of Perú. For the reason that most of the writers of this period found their chief inspiration in the ideals and events of the struggle for freedom, the literary and political threads are interwoven more successfully in this chapter than in the preceding one.

In chapter III, after giving briefly the course of the revolution that gave national independence to Mexico, the author discusses the writings inspired by the struggle. These are fewer proportionately and less important than in South America, for the reason that the revolution in its inception and progress was supported mainly by the uneducated masses, whereas in South America the intellectuals formed the backbone of the opposition to Spain. The second half of the chapter, treating of Cuban literature during the same period, gives to Heredia more than twelve pages, a space out of proportion to his importance when compared with the briefer treatment of such men as Bello and Andrade. It is the opinion of the reviewer that all the best writers should have been treated with equal generosity, the necessary space to be gained by the elimination of scores of third-rate authors, of interest only to the specialist.

Only the most general comments can be made here upon the ten chapters in which each country is given a separate treatment. In the case of each the most important events in the growth of republican government are noticed and the relation between political events and literature pointed out. This

combining of the political and literary history is done with notable success in the treatment of certain countries, such as Mexico, Cuba, and Argentina, for the reason perhaps that in these countries the points of contact between the literature and politics are most numerous. Some attempt is made to find an explanation for the predominance here and there of certain kinds of literature in the national character and peculiar political development of the various countries, a matter worthy of more attention than it receives. For example, the virile, practical, comparatively unimaginative character of the Chileans "reveals itself spontaneously in prose forms of literature, especially historical writing and the kindred novel"; poetry with them is a "cultivated plant" in spite of the large number of poets. On the other hand, poetry forms the greater part of the literature of the Colombians, the highly imaginative, idealistic, rhetorical descendants of the Andalusian colonists. Similarly, certain phases of literature receive special attention in the treatment of certain countries. The Americanization of literature manifests itself mainly in the "criollismo" of the naturalistic fiction of Venezuela, Argentina, and Uruguay; indigenous inspiration in Uruguayan poetry and in the "gaucho" literature of Argentina; poetry of high moral and social significance in Argentina and Cuba; the political tract in Cuba. Gay wit and subtle irony give a peculiar individuality to Peruvian literature. In Mexico all the literary genres are well represented, poetry, drama, novel, and history; this fact and the skilful combining of political and literary history make this one of the most interesting chapters in the book.

The final chapter gives an account of the recent literary tendencies known as the "Modernista" movement. The fact that this movement has manifested itself throughout Spanish-America without any regard for national frontiers makes possible a unified treatment, admirably conceived and carried out. Mexico, Cuba, and Colombia supplied the precursors of the movement in Gutiérrez Nájera, Julián del Casal, and José Asunción Silva, respectively. Rubén Darío of Central America, combining with rare genius their literary innovations with those of the French Parnassian, decadent and symbolist schools, became the recognized leader of the movement in its first phase; the second, present-day phase, the tendency toward complete Americanization, has for leader the Peruvian poet, José Santos Chocano, rightly called "El Poeta de América." If Dr. Coester has been content in the preceding chapters with being the chronicler of the facts of literary history, in this final chapter he shows what he can do as literary historian.

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